

In the United States Court of Federal Claims
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS
No. 23-205V

ERNY POPE,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: June 7, 2024

*Leah VaSahnja Durant, Law Offices of Leah V. Durant, PLLC, Washington, DC, for
Petitioner.*

Sarah Christina Duncan, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION AWARDING DAMAGES¹

On February 13, 2023, Erny Pope filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*² (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that she suffered Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”) as a result of an influenza (“flu”) vaccine she received on September 23, 2021 (a “Table injury”). Petition at 1. The case was assigned to the Special Processing Unit of the Office of Special Masters.

On March 22, 2024, a ruling on entitlement was issued, finding Petitioner entitled to compensation for GBS. On June 3, 2024, Respondent filed a proffer on award of compensation (“Proffer”) indicating Petitioner should be awarded \$173,519.80, representing compensation for pain and suffering (\$160,000.00), past unreimbursable expenses (\$1,577.00), and past lost wages (\$11,942.80). Proffer at 1-2. In the Proffer,

¹ Because this Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action taken in this case, it must be made publicly accessible and will be posted on the United States Court of Federal Claims’ website, and/or at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/uscourts/national/cofc>, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2018) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the Decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

Respondent represented that Petitioner agrees with the proffered award. *Id.* Based on the record as a whole, I find that Petitioner is entitled to an award as stated in the Proffer.

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Proffer, **I award Petitioner a lump sum payment of \$173,519.80 (representing compensation for pain and suffering (\$160,000.00), past unreimbursable expenses (\$1,577.00), and past lost wages (\$11,942.80)) in the form of a check payable to Petitioner.** This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under Section 15(a).

The Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Brian H. Corcoran

Brian H. Corcoran
Chief Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

ERNY POPE,

Petitioner,

V.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES,

Respondent.

No. 23-205V

Chief Special Master Corcoran
ECF

RESPONDENT'S PROFFER ON AWARD OF COMPENSATION

On February 13, 2023, Erny Pope (“petitioner”) filed a petition for compensation under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (“Vaccine Act” or “Act”), as amended. Petitioner alleges that she suffered Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”) as a result of an influenza (“flu”) vaccine she received on September 23, 2021 (a “Table injury”). Petition at 1, 4. On March 19, 2024, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (“respondent”) filed a Rule 4(c) Report recommending that compensation be awarded for GBS, and the Chief Special Master issued a Ruling on Entitlement finding petitioner entitled to compensation on March 22, 2024. ECF No. 18; ECF No. 20.

I. Items of Compensation

A. Pain and Suffering

Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded \$160,000.00 in actual pain and suffering. Petitioner agrees.

B. Past Unreimbursable Expenses

Evidence supplied by petitioner documents that she incurred past unreimbursable expenses related to her vaccine-related injury. Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded past unreimbursable expenses in the amount of \$1,577.00. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(1)(B). Petitioner agrees.

C. Lost Wages

Evidence supplied by petitioner documents that she incurred past lost wages related to her vaccine-related injury. Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded past lost wages in the amount of \$11,942.80. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(3)(A). Petitioner agrees.

These amounts represent all elements of compensation to which petitioner is entitled under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a). Petitioner agrees.

II. Form of the Award

Petitioner is a competent adult. Evidence of guardianship is not required in this case. Respondent recommends that the compensation provided to petitioner should be made through a lump sum payment as described below and requests that the Chief Special Master's decision and the Court's judgment award the following¹: a lump sum payment of \$173,519.80, representing compensation for pain and suffering (\$160,000.00), past unreimbursable expenses (\$1,577.00), and past lost wages (\$11,942.80), in the form of a check payable to petitioner, Erny Pope.

¹ Should petitioner die prior to entry of judgment, the parties reserve the right to move the Court for appropriate relief. In particular, respondent would oppose any award for future lost earnings and future pain and suffering.

III. Summary of Recommended Payments Following Judgment

Lump sum payable to petitioner, Erny Pope: **\$173,519.80**

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN M. BOYNTON
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General

C. SALVATORE D’ALESSIO
Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

HEATHER L. PEARLMAN
Deputy Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

JULIA M. COLLISON
Assistant Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

s/ Sarah C. Duncan
SARAH C. DUNCAN
Trial Attorney
Torts Branch, Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, D.C. 20044-0146
Tel: (202) 514-9729
Email: sarah.c.duncan@usdoj.gov

DATED: June 3, 2024